

INTERNATIONAL CODE COUNCIL  
COMMENTS TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY  
STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
March 18, 2013

Chairpersons Hartley and Dargan, and members of the Committee on Public Safety and Security,

Good evening and thank you for the opportunity to offer comments regarding HB 6524. My name is Roland Hall, Senior Manager of Government Relations for the International Code Council.

The International Code Council (ICC), a membership association dedicated to building safety and fire prevention, develops the codes used to construct residential and commercial buildings. Most U.S. cities, counties and states that adopt codes choose the International Codes developed by ICC. It is the mission of the ICC to provide the highest quality codes, standards, products, and services for all concerned with the safety and performance of the built environment.

The citizens and businesses of Connecticut currently benefit from building safety and efficiency requirements by using the model codes developed by the ICC, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and other standards organizations, and modifying them to address Connecticut's industry and construction needs. These codes are developed by the nation's leading building scientists, fire and life safety officials, home builders, contractors, commercial builders, architects, structural and mechanical engineers, and product manufacturers.

We are opposed to HB 6524, which would prohibit the State Building Inspector and the Codes and Standards Committee from updating the State Building Code to new editions of the national model codes less than six years from a previous update. We issue new editions of our codes every three years, and many states and local jurisdictions update their codes on that schedule.

Although Connecticut has not typically updated the codes to match that cycle, it is important to allow the State Building Inspector and the Codes and Standards Committee to have the flexibility to do so in a shorter time period than six years. The state could fall behind the national standards for building and life safety, and limit the use of safe and cost-effective construction standards or methods, new and emerging technology and building innovations, and cutting edge building materials.

HB 6524 could have an adverse effect on insurance premiums throughout the state. The Insurance Services Office (ISO), the national organization that rates communities for fire and disaster exposure, rates each jurisdiction based upon their updated building codes, the Building Codes Effectiveness Grading Schedule. Depending on when a community is rated, keeping a code in effect for six years or more will negatively impact its rating. ISO is also in the process of incorporating fire code adoption and enforcement as criteria into their Community Fire Suppression Rating Schedule, and full credit can be obtained only when the latest codes are adopted.

Homes built with the most current and up to date codes save significant dollars on energy usage. Research studies have shown that home owners save considerably on their energy bills, negating the argument that newly developed codes unnecessarily increase the cost of construction. The Building Codes Assistance Project (BCAP) has issued many reports on this caveat and we encourage you to

carefully review their analyses. Please visit <http://bcap-energy.org/why-energy-codes-matter/> for this information.

Updated Codes enhance economic development thru the utilization of state-of-the art technology in materials research, design and construction practices, and hazards to the public in buildings and structures. New codes reference the latest industry standards for the manufacture and installation of building materials, allowing the use of modern, often more economical, materials and methods. It is not always about adding new provisions to the codes, outdated methodologies or provisions are removed from the model codes through the national code development process. The process, known as a governmental consensus process, is conducted in open public forums, with decision transparency, due process, appeals process and majority consensus.

Anyone can submit a proposal to change the codes, with discussion and decision on the proposal occurring in open public hearings. The final decision, however, on whether any proposal is accepted is determined by a vote of representatives of our Governmental Members, state and local jurisdictions. These public safety officials represent only the public interest and have no financial interest in the result. The ICC process allows all jurisdictions to benefit from the expertise of thousands of professionals and provides code officials, architects, engineers, designers, and contractors to work with a consistent set of requirements.

The ICC respectfully requests that this Committee carefully consider the negative impact of HB 6524 on the State's ability to provide affordable, safe, and energy efficient housing, and ensure the public safety of its communities where we live, work, and play. Do not hamstring the State Building Inspector and the Codes and Standards Committee by preventing them from adopting new beneficial code provisions when desired or necessary.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on this bill. I am glad to answer any questions you may have or to provide additional information. If you want to contact me at a later date, my information is below.

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